

# Community Choice Energy

A Guide for  
Berkeley Residents  
and Businesses

## Community Choice in Berkeley

Alameda County is conducting a feasibility study for a countywide Community Choice program. The County is holding public workshops to consider forming a local power agency that may include Berkeley and other cities.

The City of Berkeley has expressed interest in joining a Community Choice program. The City will evaluate the County's program, including its governance structure, portfolio of renewable electricity sources, economic and climate action benefits, startup costs (if any) and other features.

The City of Berkeley will consider the views of Berkeley residents and businesses before making a decision. To learn more about the City's activities addressing Community Choice, visit [www.cityofberkeley.info/communitychoice](http://www.cityofberkeley.info/communitychoice)

To learn more about Alameda County's Community Choice program, visit [www.acgov.org/cda/planning/cca](http://www.acgov.org/cda/planning/cca)

## Where can I get more information about Community Choice Energy in Berkeley?

The Berkeley Community Choice Energy Working Group is part of the Berkeley Climate Action Coalition, which is helping to implement Berkeley's Climate Action Plan.

The Climate Action Coalition believes Community Choice could be one of the most important long-term strategies for achieving the greenhouse gas reduction goals in Berkeley's Climate Action Plan.

Contact us for more information or to get involved.

[www.berkeleycommunitychoice.org](http://www.berkeleycommunitychoice.org)  
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## What is Community Choice Energy?

Community Choice energy programs allow cities or counties to form a not-for-profit local power agency that bundles the buying power of residents and businesses to purchase electricity. The local power agency can build or fund local clean energy projects, buy renewable energy on the market, offer energy efficiency services and incentives to customers, and set electricity rates.

## What about PG&E?

PG&E still delivers power to homes and businesses and handles billing and power line maintenance. What changes is that the Community Choice program supplies the electricity and sets rates for its customers. Customers wishing to remain with PG&E may opt out of the local Community Choice agency's program and purchase their energy through PG&E.

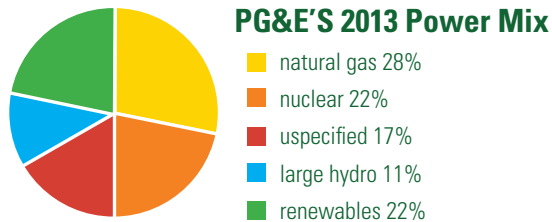
## Are there any Community Choice programs in California?

Marin Clean Energy was California's first Community Choice program. Sonoma Clean Power launched in 2014. Richmond, El Cerrito, San Pablo, Benicia, and Napa County participate in Marin Clean Energy. San Francisco's program may launch by 2016. Other communities in the Bay Area and throughout California are exploring creating or joining Community Choice programs. Alameda County is conducting a feasibility study with an eye toward creating a program by 2016.

## Can Community Choice help Berkeley reduce its greenhouse gas emissions?

Berkeley's buildings account for 35% of the City's greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs). Community Choice could be an important tool for achieving the GHG reduction goals set forth in Berkeley's Climate Action Plan.

Sonoma Clean Power's electricity mix includes 33% renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind, with more renewables coming online all the time. By comparison, renewable sources of electricity make up 22% of PG&E's power mix, with a requirement to achieve 33% by 2020.



PG&E relies heavily on nuclear and large hydro to keep its power mix relatively clean. A nuclear-free Community Choice program would need to find other, low-carbon sources of electricity in order to provide a cleaner mix than PG&E.

Given Alameda County's goal of reducing GHGs 80% by 2050, the Community Choice Energy Working Group expects the County's Community Choice program to act faster than PG&E to develop clean energy and energy efficiency projects to reduce Berkeley's GHGs.

## Potential Benefits of Community Choice Energy

### Economic benefits and jobs

Investments in local clean energy projects could create up to 2,400 jobs and stimulate the local economy with over \$865 million of net revenue. In addition, a strong energy efficiency program could generate financial savings for residents, businesses, and local government.

### Greater local control and accountability

Community Choice puts a local, not-for-profit government agency in charge of providing electricity, giving community members a means for voicing their ideas and concerns, and ensuring local oversight and control.

### Increased consumer choice

Consumers will have the option of Community Choice or PG&E to supply their electricity. Increased competition may result in better service, lower rates, and a broader range of solar and energy efficiency options and incentives.

### Taxpayer savings

The City of Richmond and the West Contra Costa Unified School District save \$126,000 a year as customers of Marin Clean Energy instead of PG&E.

### Potential Risks of Community Choice

Electricity rates could be affected by energy markets and state regulations. The program will need to purchase power in anticipation of expected demand; inaccurate demand projections or loss of customers to PG&E could result in higher rates. This has not occurred in the Marin or Sonoma programs.

Alameda County and, possibly, participating cities, may be asked to underwrite startup costs, which would be fully recoverable after the program launches and starts generating revenue. Sonoma County is underwriting \$3 million in startup costs, which are expected to be recovered in the near future. In Marin, the public startup costs have been fully recovered.

